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**GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS.**

BAMFORD HOUSE, BIDBROUGH STREET, LONDON, W.C.

**CONFERENCE**

OF

Representatives of National Federations of the  
Trade Unions of the Entente Powers.

HELD IN THE OFFICES OF THE

**GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS,**  
LONDON,

**On September 10th and 11th, 1917.**

LONDON :

# Conference of Representatives of National Federations the Trade Unions of the Entente Powers.

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SAKHA NOVAKOVITCH, Syndicats General des Ouvriers Serbes.  
GOZLARE MAXIMOVITCH, Syndicats General des Ouvriers Serbes.

AMERICA.

GOLDEN, American Federation of Labour.  
LORD, American Federation of Labour.

CANADA.

DAVID REES, Trades and Labour Congress of Canada.

A Conference of representatives of National Federations of the Trade Unions of the Entente Powers which are affiliated to the International Secretariat was held at the offices of the General Federation of Trade Unions of Great Britain on Monday and Tuesday, September 10th and 11th, 1917. Mr. James O'Grady, M.P., presided, and delegates were present representing France, Italy, Belgium, Canada, America, Serbia, and Great Britain. The delegates present were:—

FRANCE.

L. JOUTHAUX, Confédération Générale du Travail.  
A. LEQUET, Fédération de Coiffeurs, représentant C.G.T.  
J. BLED, Union des Syndicats de la Seine, représentant C.G.T.  
PIERRE DUMAS, Fédération de l'Habillement, représentant C.G.T.  
A. KEUFER, French Typographical Association.  
G. TOULOUSE, Fédération des Cheminots, représentant C.G.T.  
RIVELLI, Fédération Nationale des Syndicats Maritimes, représentant C.G.T.  
MAMMALLE, Livre, représentant C.G.T.  
J. GUINCHARD, Fédération des Transports, représentant C.G.T.

GREAT BRITAIN.

*Management Committee of the General Federation of Trade Unions:*—

JOSEPH CROSS, Northern Counties Weavers.  
BEN COOPER, Cigar Makers' Mutual Association.

ALFRED SHORT, Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders.

ALLEN GEE, Yorkshire Textile Workers.

T. MALLALIEU, Amalgamated Felt Hatters' Union.

T. F. RICHARDS, National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives.

*Metal Workers:*—

JOHN V. STEVENS, International Metal Workers.  
J. T. BROWNLEE, International Metal Workers.

CHARLES HOBSON, International Metal Workers.

*Sailors and Firemen:*—

J. HAVELOCK WILSON, National Sailors' and Firemen's Union.  
E. CATHERY, National Sailors' and Firemen's Union.  
T. CHAMBERS, National Sailors' and Firemen's Union.  
*Textile Workers:*—

WILLIAM POPE, Textile Factory Workers' Association.  
WILLIAM HESMONDHALGH, Textile Factory Workers' Association.  
A. H. COTTAM, Textile Factory Workers' Association.  
E. DUXBURY, Textile Factory Workers' Association.  
G. W. JONES, Textile Factory Workers' Association.  
T. SHAW, United Textile Factory Workers.  
BEN TURNER, General Union of Textile Workers.  
W. G. ROBINSON, Textile Factory Workers.

*Cotton Spinners:*—

GEORGE RAGBY, Amalgamated Operative Cotton Spinners.  
PETER BULLOUGH, Amalgamated Operative Cotton Spinners.  
HENRY BOOTHMAN, Amalgamated Operative Cotton Spinners.

SERBIA.

SAKHA NOVAKOVITCH, Syndicats General des Ouvriers Serbes.

AMERICA.

CANADA.

DAVID REES, Trades and Labour Congress of Canada.

Apologies for non-attendance were received from the Right Hon. G. H. Roberts (Minister of Labour), Mr. J. R. Clynes, M.P., Mr. Ben Tillett, Mr. John Taylor.

In his introductory speech the CHAIRMAN said: A number of our delegates have had great difficulty in getting to London in time for this meeting. Some of them will not be able to be present at all, and they include members of the Management Committee of the General Federation, who have other emergency appointments in connection with the Labour movement. In the first place, he desired, on behalf of the General Federation of Trade Unions (which is the only British organisation affiliated to the International Trade Union Secretariat) to extend a very hearty welcome to friends who are representing France, Belgium, Italy, Serbia, Canada, and America. He desired also to say that this Conference was a business conference rather than a political one. The International Trade Union movement has too long allowed the politicians to give expression to what has been taken for the voice of the organised workers of the world. We are going to take up our stand as an organised movement not only in industrial matters, but on all political questions that directly or indirectly affect the lives of our Trade Union organisations and their membership.

From the commencement of the war the General Federation of Trade Unions has taken up a very strong attitude on this matter, and, in spite of representations made to us by the French, we still maintain the position which we took up when war broke out. All through we have been against any meeting of the International Trade Union movement which included enemy countries until the armies of the Central Powers were back behind their own frontiers. We do not take up that attitude because we have any deep-rooted animosity to the German people as a people, but on the one side you have the Entente Powers governed by democratic principles; on the other side you have the Central Powers governed by autocratic principles. Until those autocratic principles are destroyed for ever by the people of the Central Powers, or until the people make a real attempt to destroy them, it is our opinion that a meeting between the two sides, at all events for the moment, is utterly impracticable and impossible.

One of the questions that will be discussed at this Conference is the removal of the International Secretariat from Berlin to a town in a neutral country. Let there be no mistake about the position which has obtained for the last 14 years. If I know the feeling of the Trade Unionists of the Entente Powers it is that never again are we going to allow the German Trade Union movement to dominate the International movement as it has done. Each country ought to stand upon its dignity. If it is a question of money, then we should be prepared to share the cost. If it is a question of work and organisation then each country should be prepared to play its part. Only on that foundation can we, in the future, prevent the Trade Union movement in Germany retaining the International Secretariat at Berlin and dominating the whole International.

I think I speak for the Management Committee of the General Federation of Trade Unions when I say that our one-time German comrades have lost the confidence of the British Trade Union movement. As far as we have been able to gather the German Trade Union movement has never yet taken a step to protest against what has been done by their own Government in the countries which have been invaded by the Central Powers. We know that the Belgian and the Serbian Trade Union movements have been almost wiped off the face of the earth by the Germans. I do not complain about that because it may be an act of war, but what I do complain about is that the German Trade Union movement and the International Secretariat (of which the Serbian and Belgian Trade Unionists are a part) have never raised a voice of protest. It is a most extraordinary thing to me that while the German Trade Unionists claim to be democrats and Socialists yet the only autocratic Powers in the world to-day are the Central Powers, and the Governments of Germany and Austria are backed to a man by the Trade Union movements of their respective countries. There can be no liberty for the Trade Union movement in the event of inconclusive peace or a victory for the arms of the Central Powers.

The war has been a terrible tragedy to every movement in the world. I speak for the Management Committee of the General Federation of Trade Unions when I say that we believe that only when the German military machine is smashed beyond all possibility of repair will it be possible for free men, free peoples, and free nations to breathe the atmosphere of liberty. Until that is done the existence, the life, and the well-being of our Trade Union movement hangs in the balance. And so our money, our influence, our industrial and political power shall be used to assure that the great democratic movement of the world shall not be called upon by men or by Governments to undergo the hell of torture, suffering, and sacrifice that it has undergone during the last three years. ((Applause).

#### THE GENERAL FEDERATION'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE INTERNATIONAL.

Mr. W. A. APPLETON: I want to make the reason for the calling of the Conference quite clear to some of our English friends. It is not a new thing. We have been meeting the French, the Italians, and the Belgians during the whole of the time that the war has been in progress, and this Conference arose out of the decisions of the General Council of the Federation, which met in Gloucester on July 6th and 7th. We were members of the International many years ago, and I think our relationships will be made quite clear to you if I read a letter written recently to Mr. T. F. Richards in which a number of specific questions were asked and answered.

The questions and answers were as follows:—

Q. What is the proper designation of the International that the Federation is linked up with? A. It is the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres. The International Federation of National Federations of Trade Unions. The head office is in Berlin, and the Secretary is Carl Legien, member of the Reichstag for Keil. The Federation has been in existence about 17 years. Isaac Mitchell and Pete Curran were, I believe, the first representatives to the International meeting. You will perhaps remember that the International met at Dublin in 1903 under the auspices of the General Federation of Trade Unions. Our connection has never been broken, and we have paid our contributions to the outbreak of war.

Q. Who are the bodies affiliated in this country besides ourselves?

A. There is no other body in this country affiliated to the International Secretariat but the General Federation of Trade Unions. Other Federations of France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Austria, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Switzerland, Spain, and the United States of America.

Q. What is your official position in the movement of the International? A. As Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions (the only body affiliated in this country), I am the official correspondent, and I have, in company with other members of the Management Committee, represented the General Federation at all the International Conferences since 1906.

Q. What is the basis of representation, and who was the last representative? A. Each nation has one vote, and all decisions have been taken by the vote of the nations as nations, although, I believe, there is in the rules a clause which, under certain circumstances, permits of a membership vote being taken. The representatives of the General Federation of Trade Unions at Buda Pesth in 1911 were Mr. O'Grady, and myself. The last meeting of the International Secretariat was held in Munich in June of 1914, Mr. Tullett and myself being the representatives of the General Federation.

Q. Did the Parliamentary Committee turn down the International some 14 years ago?

A. I am not able to answer that question, but, as far as I know, the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress never took any interest in the International Trade Union movement until after the 1911 Conference at Buda Pesth. Mr. Smillie was at this Conference, not officially as a representative, but as an invited guest of the German Federation of Trade Unions. Shortly after this the Parliamentary Committee appeared to be taking some interest in the movement, and it invited Carl Legien to attend the Manchester Congress in 1913. From that time onwards the Parliamentary Committee has developed some jealousy of the Federation, and has taken to inviting representatives of Continental Federations to attend the Annual Trades Union Congresses. Personally, I have always been anxious to come to some sort of understanding, but have not received any encouragement whatever either from the Parliamentary Committee or from the Labour Party. You know just as much as I do of the intrigues which led to the exclusion of the General Federation from the Joint Board. The resolution moved by Mr. Smillie, and seconded by Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., at Birmingham had as one of its objectives the breaking of the General Federation's connection with the International Trade Union movement.

Mr. Appleton added: It was necessary for me to read this so that it shall be understood that in this matter of International Trade Unionism we are not the newcomers. We have been affiliated for a number of years, and have been very anxious that there should be clear and distinct understandings and that there should be unification of effort in this country. Sometimes the work has not been happy, especially when one, having studied Continental mentalities, has realised the effect on the other side of the blundering on this.

#### AN ITALIAN DECLARATION.

Mr. Appleton then read the following Italian letter:—

Re adhesion to Inter-Allied Conference in London. It is my honour and pleasure to inform you that the group of Italian organisations represented last year at the Leeds Conference by the undersigned, together with citizens Cabini and Boniglio, adheres as a distinct group, as results from the Leeds report to the Centre Inter-Allied Trade Union Conference appointed to be held on the 10th inst. in London. I further advise you that the said group, being unable to send its direct representatives to London, leaves itself, as regards discussions and resolutions, in the hands of the International Correspondence Office, to whom it gives full liberty with regard to adhesion to the International Congress of Trade Unions at Berne. The group reaffirms in their fullest substance the proposals and resolutions of the Leeds Conference, and with its fraternal greetings expresses its best wishes for the success of the Second Inter-Allied Conference in London. With all cordiality.

Yours faithfully,

Luovica CALDO

(Representative of the above Italian group in the temporary International Correspondence Office having its seat in Paris).

Mr. Appleton explained that whatever part he had taken in arranging the Conference he had done on behalf of M. Jouhaux, who, not understanding the English language, would have been helpless without assistance. In letters he (Mr. Appleton) had been careful to state that he was acting on behalf, because M. Jouhaux had been officially appointed

correspondent for the allied nations. Mr. Appleton added: I want to take the opportunity of saying that I am very happy to see our colleagues here in the United States and Canada. We knew that sooner or later the United States would have to come into this fight, because America was bound to come into a fight in which the issue was right versus wrong. It seemed a very long time to us as we waited and struggled along. But she is now in and we are thankful. We are thankful for her money, and we are thankful for her army, but most of all we are thankful for the fact that she has brought into the conflict on our side the man who is perhaps the first statesman of present times. We are very glad to have the American representatives at this Conference, and we hope that before they go away they will understand us thoroughly.

#### THE GENERAL FEDERATION'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONFERENCES WITH BELLIGERENT NATIONS.

The following statement of the attitude of the General Federation of Trade Unions to conferences with belligerent nations was then submitted by Mr. Appleton and translated to the Continental delegates:—

"The General Federation of Trade Unions has never deviated from its attitude towards the origin and enemy conduct of the war and towards the various proposals for peace conferences which, during the last three years, have emanated from different groups in different countries.

"It has held throughout that no such conference, including representatives of enemy countries, could meet without discussing, in the spirit of recrimination, the origin of the war, and the unusual brutalities perpetrated in Belgium, France, and Serbia. Obviously such discussions would embitter rather than relieve the situation in which International Trade Unionism found itself.

"The General Federation has consistently opposed any attempt to exclude

the fact that all the nations engaged in the war will determine to discuss peace terms from the national rather than from the party point of view, that the partisan, pressing his own ideas to the exclusion of all others, might do much to retard peace, and might even help to bring about the defeat

of those countries where democracy is a fact rather than a name. Such result would not help democracy, but might easily involve the destruction of institutions and cultures which, by comparison with Germany, are liberal and free.

"Least of all has the Federation desired to hamper Russia in her efforts of regeneration. Neither foreign bayonets, nor foreign panaceas, nor fruitless discussions, nor fulsome compliments can establish higher standards of conduct, of happiness, or of liberty in this unhappy land. Sympathy needs, sympathy she has, but her salvation can only be won by her own blood and effort. To encourage contrary assumptions is to do Russia a great disservice. Unpleasant as it undoubtedly is, the truth must awaken and save Russia, but she must awaken soon if she is to escape reimposition of an autocratic regime. From the Romanoff to the Hohenzollern, will not be a satisfactory ending of the revolution.

"It has been held that general conferences of the workers of belligerent nations should be held because the Russian Government desired them. This intention is disputed, but if it were true, it should not be accepted merely because it has been advanced. American, British, French, and Italian democracies possess that intelligence and experience which justifies them in determining their own action and they would not necessarily be either unkind or unwise in declining to accept the determinations of people preoccupied with revolution and compelled to make many doubtful experiments in the business of governing a nation.

"The Management Committee has difficulty in understanding the value of general conferences before the representatives of allied countries are agreed upon the objectives of such conferences or without being sure of the possibilities or the conditions of German participation. Even to-day the only specific terms of peace that have been stated are those emanating from the allied countries. Germany has hitherto dealt in generalities and has measured her demands by the extent of European territory she has been able to occupy. She has offered no definite statements concerning evacuation, restitution and reparation. If members of the Social Democratic Party of Germany were committed to attend at a general conference, they possess no power, nor is there any proof that they possess the inclination to discuss terms of peace other than those outlined by their Government. Even if they did discuss less onerous conditions they are powerless to enforce either in their own Parliament or in their own country any conclusions reached by any general conference.

"The confusion which exists concerning international conferences is both lamentable and expensive. Recently we have had Russia demanding a mandatory conference, Great Britain insisting that it should be consultative only, France insisting upon the discussion of the origin of the war, while Germany declines to attend any conference which makes the origin and conduct of the war a serious point of discussion. The formula, 'No indemnities and No Annexations,' needs definition and explanation before it can be discussed seriously. It ignores the point of view of the self-governing dominions, and its adoption by Britain would immediately antagonise Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. All the friends of Germany know this, and to involve Britain in conflict with her Colonies would be for them a diplomatic triumph of the first magnitude.

"It is obvious that general conferences of belligerents must be preceded by general understanding amongst the Allies, and that these conferences must be cognisance of all the facts affecting the unofficial but effective Anglo-Saxon confederation.

"An attempt to reach a general understanding of the Trade Unionists affiliated to the International Secretariat was made at Leeds in July, 1916. The conclusions then reached have been adopted even by the belligerent nations, and they offer the most reasonable basis for further Trade Union effort.

"In opposing the various proposals for conferences to be held in Stockholm and in Bern, the Federation has been actuated by the sincerest desire to avoid embittering a deplorable situation. Neither hostility to other organisations nor desire to continue war for war's own sake, has influenced its views or coloured its publications. It has, without thought of advantage to its own present or future, taken the facts of the situation as they appear, analysed them and corrected its impressions by the experiences gained during its 15 years official association with the International Trade Union Movement. Its conclusions have been given to its members and events we hitherto justified its foresight and its action and saved both the money

and the reputations of its members. Up to the present it sees no reason to depart from the policy it has consistently pursued during the war.

(Signed) Mr. J. O'GRADY, J.P., M.P. (*Chairman*), Furnishing Trades Association.

Mr. JOSEPH CROSS, J.P. (*Vice-Chairman*), Northern Counties Weavers.

Col. JOHN WARD, J.P., M.P. (*Treasurer*), Navvies, Builders and General Labourers.

Mr. JAS. CRINNON, J.P. (*Trustee*), Amalgamated Card and Blowing Room Operatives.

Mr. ALLEN GEE, J.P. (*Trustee*), Yorkshire Textile Workers. Councillor ALEXANDER WILKIE, J.P., M.P. (*Trustee*), Associated Shipwrights.

Mr. J. N. BELL, J.P., National Amalgamated Union of Labour. Mr. F. BIRCHENOUGH, J.P., Amalgamated Cotton Spinners.

Mr. BEN COOPER, Cigar Makers' Mutual Association. Councillor IVOR H. GWINNE, J.P., Tin and Sheet Millmen.

Councillor BEN TILLETT, Dock, Wharf, and Riverside Workers. Councillor T. MALLALIEU, Amalgamated Felt Hatters Union.

Councillor ALF. SHORT, Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders.

Mr. T. F. RICHARDS, Boot and Shoe Operatives.

Mr. JOHN TAYLOR, J.P., Midland Counties Federation.

"W. A. APPLETON, Secretary."

September 10th, 1917.

#### THE SERBIAN OUTLOOK.

M. NOVAKOVITCH (a Serbian delegate) said that, of course, he was champion of Trade Unionism, but he looked upon it as part of the Socialist movement. The object of all of their efforts was Socialism, and Socialism would be helped forward by the Trade Union organisations. The Chairman had said that the Conference was not a political but an economic gathering. He would have them bear in mind that so far as the Balkan Peninsula was concerned the political situation was far and away more important and urgent than the economic situation. However, he would endeavour to conform with the spirit of the gathering, and as far as the restricted scope of the subject would allow he would speak mainly from the Trade Union point of view. The movement in Serbia began to considerably develop after 1903. By this time the system of Government had become more democratic, but the working classes of Serbia, in so far as they could take any action at all, had to concentrate on acquiring the necessary liberty to form Trade Unions to take a share in the economic development of the country. A very great struggle was the consequence of their attempt to form Trade Unions, they had succeeded, and succeeded in a large measure. Before the there were something like 40,000 Trade Unionists in Serbia, and when the remembered that there was hardly a factory in Serbia and no big mills there was a very large number. The nearest approach to industrialism, such obtained in Great Britain, was supplied by the railways, which were on much the same lines as in other countries, while transport work was done on a large scale. But the enormous proportion of the things used Serbia, such as clothes, for instance, were made by hand. The hand system still prevailed, and the people made for themselves practically whole of what they wanted. They would see, therefore, that there was the scope for Trade Unionism in Serbia that there was in other countries.

It be wanted to call their attention to the fact that they had a Labour newspaper, which had a sale of 7,000 copies. The capitalists were also associated, and they also had a newspaper, but its sale was never anything like 7,000.

Trade Unionism in Serbia had been able to exert an influence on the legislature. They had been working for ten years and had obtained a ten-hour day by law. They had also obtained the abolition of night-work for women and the abolition of child labour up to the age of 14 years. They had not yet obtained compulsory insurance against accidents.

At the present moment the question of legislation and progress seemed almost too sad for words. For whom was it proposed to legislate? Of the 100,000 Trade Unionists probably not more than 12,000 were now alive. The country had been destroyed; most of the men were killed. What could they do now in the way of forming Trade Unions or anything else? All they could do was to say that they were looking for help and sustenance to their fellow workers of the allied countries. They were not appealing for charity from the capitalists. They wanted to raise themselves up again as a nation of workingmen labouring in their own little country in intimate harmony with the workers of other countries. They felt that the peace of the future depended upon economic unity as well as political unity. The workers of Serbia must unite economically with the working-class organisations of other countries. There was a great political danger in leaving little countries alone and unprotected to be a bait to the aggressor. Let them beware that they did not leave the Balkan door wide open so that another war could come breaking through. Let them close the door by uniting the peoples in the love of liberty, in the cause of democracy, and the peace of the world.

#### THE NEUTRALISATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARAT.

M. JOUHAUX (France) then moved the following resolution:—

That the National Centres of the countries, together with different National Federations affiliated to the International Trade Union Secretariat, confirm the resolution already adopted in 1915 by the General Federation of Trade Unions of Great Britain, the American Federation of Labour, and the Confederation Générale du Travail, to press for and to obtain the transfer of the Secretariat of International Trade Unionism to a neutral country; the administrative work of the Secretariat being assured and controlled by an executive representative of each country affiliated. The Conference decides that this measure is rendered necessary by the war, and that its consummation is in the highest and future interests of the world's workers.

M. Jouhaux said that the Central Bureau of the International should not be in the hands of a belligerent country. That principle was approved by the ex-Allied Conference which was held in London in 1915. It was then thought that in order to avoid giving offence to the Central Powers it would be well to get a neutral Power to intervene, and the United States of America, which were at that time a neutral Power, were asked to take the matter in hand. The American Federation of Labour applied to Carl Legien, but the Central of the International in response to an Anglo-French-American meeting held at Stockholm the Leeds resolutions were considered and finally approved, but the disapproval of the Stockholm Conference, which manifested itself, brought them to the question of the proposed Conference at Berne. The impression had got about that the Germans had stopped the International Conference at Berne. That was not the case. It was the Swiss proposal. The Swiss refused to go to Stockholm, and then proposed the Berne Conference. Later the Bureau at Berlin, finding that they

were losing ground, suddenly rallied to the Swiss proposal, and now B also proposed the Berne Conference. Nevertheless, it was a Swiss proposal and it was as a Swiss proposal that the French section approved of it. made it a stipulation that the first question to be raised should be the removal of the International Secretariat from Berlin to a neutral country. If the proposal was adopted at Berne the result would be a condemnation of German attitude and conduct throughout the war, and it was with a view getting that condemnation that the French had asked the Americans, British, and other nationalities to agree to the Berne Conference. thought that before going to Berne it would be well for the Allies to meet and discuss among themselves what they would do there, and that was why present Conference was being held. They were there to discuss the question of removing the International Secretariat from Berlin to a neutral country, and, secondly, to discuss whether or not they would go to Berne in order effect that removal.

He did not know the opinion of the delegates from the other nations; he wanted to make the French position clear. The Chairman, in his speech, insisted on the necessity of removing the Secretariat from Berlin, but did not propose any course of action by which that removal might be brought about. Something must be done. It was not sufficient merely to say something ought to be done. The Berlin answer was very clear. It was the International organisation had elected its General Secretary, and fix Central Bureau at Berlin, and that no one had either the right or the power to remove it except the International organisation which had placed it there. Therefore, the International should meet, and then it could remove Bureau or not, as it pleased. Berlin contended that no one section of International could effect the change. The only thing they had to fear that the Press might make capital against them if they appeared to such a manner as might be thought likely to favour the interests of the Central Powers. There was no difficulty in showing that they were not out to the interests of the Central Powers. In France there existed a state of that was not unlike that which they had been told existed in Serbia. industrial districts, factories, and machinery had been destroyed; men of Trade Unions were killed or scattered in all directions, and the reconstruction was very great and appalling. That state of affairs, the ruining of industry, the scattering of Trade Unions, the chaos—had produced in the minds of the workers of France a certain state of feeling, and had to be careful lest that state of feeling might lead to the dislocation French democracy. They had to be careful not to produce a state of which might cause a disastrous reaction against the democratic institutions for which they had fought and struggled, and for which they were now doing and struggling. When he advocated attending the Berne Conference, did so because it was necessary, if they considered the frame of mind large section of the French population. France, and the French were willing to continue the war. They were willing to fight on, but effect might be produced if anything was done that could make them viewed the war, and the consequences of the war, with a great deal of tension lest in some way or other what they had won by class organisation that they had acquired, should be destroyed as one of the effects of the war. If they worked for the Government as the working classes were doing it was that they might assist democracy. did not rally to their Government as allies to the capitalism of their On the contrary, it was their resolve to be made free to organise their Unions and to continue the struggle against the tyranny and the effects of capitalism. They were ready to fight for their country and for the Union principles, but they were not ready to fight for the advanced capitalism and reaction.

If they could succeed in transferring the Secretariat of the International to Berlin to a neutral country it would be a victory over German enemies, a victory for democracy, a victory for the more democratic countries in the International. It would be a victory for the democratic socialism of the future over the autocratic Syndicalism of the past as represented by Germany. They wanted to fight for democratic Trade Unionism, and, therefore, they must defeat the Germans. They could only at the Germans legally and logically by altering the constitution of the International, and that could only be done by the International itself. No section could do it, and he hoped they would add to the resolution a motion in favour of attending the Berne Conference. He moved an amendment to that effect.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** M. Jouhaux suggests that only two subjects should be discussed at Berne—the removal of the International Secretariat to Berlin, and the fixing of the guilt of this war on the shoulders of the Germans. He thinks that by attending the Conference you will be greater hope to the French democracy and strengthen their determination to go on with the war and their loyalty to the cause of democracy. The American delegates have not before attended meetings, and I ask you to adjourn the discussion until to-morrow in order that they may have an opportunity of considering a complex resolution of this kind.

M. JOUHAUX contended that the Americans knew all about the resolution. The **CHAIRMAN:** It is perfectly true that Mr. Gompers had an invitation to Berne, but as I understand it the Americans refused to go as soon as proposed gathering assumed the proportions of a general conference. M. RIVELLI (France) said he did not understand what the Trades Union Congress at Blackpool had settled. He imagined that it decided that it not be wise to go to Stockholm at the present moment, but that it would be a good thing to have an International Conference by and bye.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Only when there is agreement between the Allies.

The Conference then adjourned until the following morning.

On the resumption, Mr. J. CROSS (who occupied the chair during the temporary absence of Mr. O'Grady) suggested to the Conference that instead of the proposed Berne Conference would be a gathering very much on the lines of the proposed Stockholm Conference they should first of all deal with the resolution as it was printed on the agenda and then discuss the Conference as a separate matter. It seemed to him that there might be a complete agreement on the resolution as printed.

Jouhaux said the resolution was not new, as it had already been put forward three times. He and his French colleagues would accept Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON thereupon seconded the resolution. He said: I to say first of all, that I do not believe in a good deal of what I call the national Trade Union gatherings, and, to my mind, it means nothing.

We ought to live in a practical way, and understand things in a practical manner. I heard a good deal yesterday about the brotherhood of Well, it sounds all right, but when you get down to actual practice that there is not much brotherhood about it at all. For instance, the war we heard a good deal in Germany about the brotherhood of It was always being thrown about. We know now what brotherly love Americans have shown in this war, and more especially the leaders of the Socialists. I will give you one little instance to show the brotherly

love of these people. When the Germans captured Antwerp, one of the leaders of the German Socialist Party (the leader of the Seamen's Union) published a statement to the effect that the German flag was now flying over Antwerp, "and," he added, "may it always fly." Just think for a moment about a statement like that. Without any justification whatever the Germans invaded Belgium, wrongfully invaded Belgium, against the laws of neutrality and against the laws of all decent conduct. Then, after they had wrongfully invaded that country because, as now admitted by the politicians, of military necessity, a leading German Socialist publishes the statement that he hopes the German flag may for ever fly over Antwerp. What does your brotherly love business amount to when you have the leader of the Trade Union movement in Germany giving expression to statements like that? To me, as a common man, it shows that all this sentimental talk about brotherly love does not mean anything at all. What the German means is that they are prepared to show brotherly love as long as you are prepared to do what they want you to do. I am not a little bit impressed by the brotherly love sentiment.

The resolution that I am seconding proposes that we shall take steps to remove the International Secretariat from Berlin to some neutral country.

Mr. A. WILKIE, M.P.: There is no neutral country.

Mr. WILSON: Exactly. Is there any man in this Conference who can name a neutral country? There is not one, and I am not surprised at that. I don't think any man of commonsense ought to be surprised if he looks on the map. On the one hand, you have Sweden facing the coast of Germany, and that means Sweden is in a very awkward position. Norway, Denmark, Holland, and Switzerland are also in a very awkward position. My opinion is that the working people of those countries (except those who have been poisoned by German influence) are strongly pro-Ally. Take Sweden, for instance. There are agents of the Germans all over that country. The policy is to get amongst the working classes, and when there is any short of food, coal, or anything else these German agents tell the people that British and the French are responsible. Therefore, the people were misled as to the actual position. But what is the position of the financial class in Sweden? They have been seeking to profit out of the war. They have been supplying food to Germany at high prices, and have been paid in money. If Germany was to go down to-morrow thousands of those fine people in Sweden would be ruined. Consequently their sympathies are with the Germans.

Italy did not come into the war until nearly 14 months after it was broken out. Why? Because all the men of financial standing were sub to the influence of the German financiers. A large number of the shipping companies of Italy were financed by German capital. I put it to any of you that if you happened to be the manager of an Italian shipping company, the manager of Italian business concern, and you knew that if Italy went into the war your income would be cut off, the chances are that patriotism would stop short, and you would be inclined to sympathise with the Germans. It was the poor people of Italy, and not the well-to-do, who were responsible for the entry of Italy into the war.

All this kind of thing permeates every one of the neutral countries to-day, so that when you talk about going to a neutral country—well, you had better try to find one, in the moon or some other planet. It is necessary that the International Secretariat should be removed from Berlin. I say a statement yesterday that I could not understand. It was to the effect that we could not remove the International Secretariat unless we called a conference of all the countries that are interested in the International Federation. Let us look at it for a moment and see what it amounts to. Are these national Federations established by law? Is there any law on the

do not know of any. It is simply a common understanding between the people concerned. Why do you want to move the International Secretariat? Because you allege that the other people have broken the rules of the International. Well, then, if it is true that they have broken the rules, that is ample justification for those of you who believe it (and I believe it very strongly) to take the step that is proposed. As far as the transport workers are concerned, I say that the Germans have deliberately broken every rule of the International. Therefore, we are justified in calling together those countries who believe that the rules have been broken; and over the heads of the Germans we are justified in establishing an International Secretariat in a neutral country, but in any country that we think most convenient to ourselves. That is a strong action to take, but events justify us in taking strong action.

It is suggested that a conference including representatives of the opposing countries should be called. What a lovely conference that would be! You would be calling the other fellows together to tell them that you were going to kick them out. It cannot mean anything else but that. You would say: "Gentlemen, you have had the headquarters at Berlin, but we are disgusted with your conduct, and we are going to establish the headquarters in another place." Do you think you could make any headway in such a conference as that? Do you think you would come to a mutual understanding about anything? The German nature must have changed a devil of a lot since I last met Germans if you could meet them in a room and tell that you are going to put them in their proper place, and move the headquarters, and then expect them quietly to say: "Yes, we think that is the best thing you could do." If the Germans have got that far the German nature must have undergone a tremendous change.

To get back to the resolution. I certainly advocate the removal of the International Secretariat from Germany. Put it where you like (in France you like), anywhere but Germany. I speak as a Britisher. You will never any good with the Germans until the Germans admit that they are

We hear a lot of talk about democracy. I am getting sick of the word. It is on my nerves because generally the men who preach it do not practise it. If you really want the democratic principle to operate on matters of importance why not let it do so? Before deciding whether or not to meet any delegates why not have a plebiscite of all Trade Union members. That right have a few leaders to meet a few other leaders and decide to meet Germans whether the members of the unions like it or not? This matter is important that you have no right to do that. Our business is to consult rank and file, to put a plain statement before them, and to take their opinion. The working people of all the countries ought to have a say in this matter, and especially after what has recently taken place in this country. Put six weeks ago the Miners' Federation by a tremendous vote decided to send peace delegates to Stockholm. Within ten days they reversed that decision. Why? Because opportunity had been given to the rank and file to express their opinion. I say now that if you consult the rank and file in this country as to whether or not you should go to Berne 90 out of every 100 would say: "No. Get on with the war until the Germans admit defeat."

I second this resolution. As I said before, there is no neutral country. I did not like to see the French people unduly punished by straining them much to carry on the war, but I say to them: "Hang on. Hang on with determination. The Germans have wronged your country. They have wronged all countries. They have wronged humanity at large. It is our duty to put them right and to teach them that if they are going to preach

the brotherhood of man they must believe in what they preach and practice a little of it." Mr. MALLAIEU suggested that the resolution should be disposed of, as the discussion was impinging on the discussion that would take place later on the Berne proposal.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we might hear our American friends, and then we will take the sense of the meeting as to whether or not the matter of the resolution shall be decided on without further discussion.

The French delegates intimated that they thought some of the matters dealt with by Mr. Havelock Wilson were not in order, as they referred to the Berne proposal. However, they would vote on the resolution and then discuss the Berne proposal later on.

Mr. BROWNLIE (President of the British Section of the International Metal Workers' Federation): The resolution proposes to remove the International Secretariat from Berlin and locate it in a neutral country. Mr. Havelock Wilson has rightly said that there are no neutral countries in Europe at the present moment. The Metal Workers' Federation have for 18 months or two years been considering the question as to what would be the best place for the headquarters of our Federation, and we have no hesitation in saying that at the present moment the United Kingdom is the most suitable place from all points of view. We have greater freedom and greater liberty in corresponding with non-belligerent countries than is enjoyed by any other country. In the early days of the war we broke off communication with Germany and Austria for the period of the war. We did so for these reasons. We did not desire to implicate our Secretary in any serious complication through communicating with enemy countries, and neither did we desire to implicate our German and Austrian secretaries. I must confess that we were somewhat influenced by what Mr. Havelock Wilson has described as the sentimentality of the International. As the war went on we became more convinced than ever that it would be unwise to allow the headquarters of our Federation to be within the precincts of the Germanic powers, and we hope in the near future to come to an understanding with our French, Italian, and other comrades in order that we may be able to have the headquarters of our Federation placed in some country where it will be free from the corrupting and corroding influence of Germany. I am not one of those who say I will never shake hands with or speak to a German as long as I live, but so long as I am acting in the Trade Union and Labour movement I shall consider it highly impolitic to fraternise with any representatives from Germany and Austria until they have made their position clear. Let me give you one simple incident which was brought to my notice in the first six months of the war when Germany invaded Belgium. A well known German Socialist entered the Maison du Peuple and held out hand to a well-known Belgian Socialist. The Belgian refused to accept hand of the German. "What are you doing here?" he asked. "Why you found in this crowd?" "Well," was the reply of the German, "is the quickest way to get through and so avoid unnecessary sacrifice of life." I am glad that the hand of the German Socialist was spurned by the Belgian. If we are actuated by these material considerations in relation to honour, equity, and justice then there is no hope for the International. I stand the International, and I hope that out of the ashes of this world war there will rise a strong and powerful International. I hope that we shall understand each other better in the future than we have in the past, and that when Conference does come we shall enter it with clean hands and prepared at times to put our cards on the table face upwards. At the present moment we are quite in agreement with the sentiment of the resolution. The International Metal Workers' Federation were invited to the Berne Conference.

the early part of 1915 and refused to attend. We communicated that decision to our French comrades, and they then received our decision with acclamation, and said they would attend no Conference unless the British also attended.

Mr. GOLDEN (American Federation of Labour): Some time ago the American Federation of Labour declared its position on this matter. We favoured the proposal that the International Secretariat should be removed from Berlin and located in Switzerland. There was some little difference of opinion as to what place in Switzerland should be chosen. I remember that in our last discussion with Mr. Gompers and the rest of our Executive Council before we left America Mr. Gompers in particular was very emphatic indeed in the belief that, considering what had occurred, and especially taking into account what has happened since the beginning of this year, there were now no neutral countries. It, therefore, strikes me that if there are no neutral countries it would be both impractical and unwise to have our headquarters completely in the hands and under the control of a hostile country. There is only one thing we can do now, and that is to establish our headquarters in one of the allied countries. There will no doubt be a difference of opinion when it comes to a choice of the country. I am not authorised to even suggest America. In the first place, I realise the difficulty caused by the tremendous distance, and I realise also that the question will come up later on. It does seem to me that when we get down to fundamental considerations (and I do not desire to take anything away from the importance of the proposition we are now discussing) we have to realise that for the sake of the moral effect, and for the sake of the probable hastening of the day of peace, there should, if possible, be a unanimous vote on this resolution. That, I know, is the sentiment of the American Federation of Labour. It may not be possible to prove it materially, but we in America believe that if we allow the headquarters of the International to remain in Berlin that can be construed as meaning nothing more or less than giving aid and comfort to the enemy. After hearing the speeches which have been delivered here, I have no doubt as to what the decision will be. I think that one of the most effective actions that could be taken at this time in paving the way towards more harmony and a more "get-together" spirit on some of the essential matters that we have to take up later would be to remove the International Secretariat from Berlin. I should like to see a unanimous vote in favour of taking away our headquarters from a country ruled by one of the most cruel and brutal Governments we have ever had to fight in any of our wars. I hope that for the effect it will create this resolution will be carried unanimously. It will not only give encouragement to the Allies, but it will also serve as a very effective moral lesson to those representatives of the German Labour movement who, we believe, have not lost the line.

The Conference decided that the resolution should be decided upon without further discussion, and it was thereupon carried unanimously.

Mr. BEN COOPER: Are we now committed to the principle that the headquarters shall be established in a neutral country?

Mr. O'GRADY (who had now resumed the chair): As I understand it, we are decided to remove the Bureau to some country other than Germany.

Mr. COOPER: The resolution says a neutral country.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, that will come up on the French resolution dealing with the Berne Conference.

#### THE BERNE CONFERENCE.

The Conference decided to proceed with the discussion of the French resolution, and M. JOURDAIN thereupon moved:—

That an International Conference shall be held at Berne to decide the removal from Berlin of the International Secretariat, the Conference to be

representative of the belligerent and neutral countries affiliated to the International Federation.

The CHAIRMAN : M. Jouhaux in his speech yesterday made out his case for the Berne Conference.

Mr. CRINION : Assuming that a vote is taken. We have no Belgian or Italian delegates here, but the letter received from the Italians said that they were prepared to fall in with the French view. What will be the position if you take a vote of those present this morning? Supposing a majority here decides in favour of the Berne Conference (although that majority will not carry a full representation) will that decide the question as to whether or not we are to meet the enemy at Berne? If it means that I want to say that I am not prepared to cast a vote without instructions from the people I represent. I claim that as representative men who have not received a mandate from our members we have no right to commit those members to support of a proposition for meeting the enemy. What would have been the position if the Secretariat had been taken over by the Americans? Should we not have been content with that? The Americans have now come into the war, but is it too late to consider whether they or the French should not take over the Secretariat?

The CHAIRMAN : I understand that the Italians have given the French their vote. The Belgian vote would have to be obtained by correspondence. In reply to Mr. Crinion's other point, I have to say that neither the Americans nor the French can accept the Secretariat, because the resolution that we passed just now states that it shall be established in a neutral country.

Mr. CRINION : But there is no neutral country.

The CHAIRMAN : I have nothing to do but to allow the discussion to go on. Does any nation second the resolution?

M. NOVAKOVITCH (Serbia) seconded.

M. JOUHAUX explained that his proposal was not a proposal to go to Berne to meet the Germans; it was a proposal to accept the invitation of the Swiss to go to Berne to meet the International and to decide by the law of the International that the Secretariat should be transferred from Berne. To him the law of the International was much more important than the law of any State, and he thought they were bound to obey the law of the International, which was that they could not alter the location of the Secretariat unless they had a meeting of the International for that purpose.

Mr. BROWNLIE : Does it mean a Conference of the nations here represented, but not including the representatives of the Central Powers?

M. JOUHAUX : The Germans will be there, but there is a difference between accepting a Swiss invitation and a German invitation. We should accept the Swiss invitation because it is in order according to the law of the International.

M. NOVAKOVITCH said it was very important that that Conference should make it quite clear that there was no desire to go to Berne to meet the Germans. They would only go there to transfer the Bureau from Berne to some other place. They would go there to impeach the Germans, and the fact that they were going to take the Bureau away from Germany was in itself a condemnation of the Germans. There was a great difference between doing that and going to Berne to have a general discussion with the Germans. To attend a conference which had for its object the impeachment of a certain party and the removal of it from the fulfilment of certain functions was quite a different thing to attending a general conference for the purpose of having a general discussion. If he went back to Serbia and said that they had gone to Berne to meet the Germans he would be accused and attacked by his

followers. He only wanted to go to Berne to accuse the Germans and to drive them out of the International Bureau.

Mr. BEN COOPER : Is the only object of the Berne Conference the removal of the Secretariat from Berlin? Is that the only issue to be discussed, and is there no general programme? If general issues are to be discussed, then the position is quite different.

M. JOUHAUX explained that when the French accepted the invitation to go to Berne they said they would only be willing to go if the question of the removal of the Secretariat was the first question on the agenda. That was their stipulation. Carl Legien, of the Berlin Bureau, said they were willing to discuss the question of the removal of the Secretariat as the last subject on the agenda. The Germans wanted to discuss all the other questions first, and the removal of the Secretariat afterwards. The French attitude was exactly the opposite, and the Swiss accepted the French proposal. That settled everything. They would then know exactly in what position they were placed. They would know where they were, and on what side the International leaned, and when they knew that the representatives of the allied countries would be able to take up their position.

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON : I would like to ask if it is the wish and desire of the French, if they go to Berne, that the Germans should be present taking part in the Conference.

'The CHAIRMAN : The resolution is as clear as possible; there is no doubt about what it means. It says: "That an International Conference shall be held at Berne to discuss the removal from Berlin of the International Secretariat, the Conference to be representative of the belligerent and neutral countries affiliated to the International Federation." That means everybody affiliated.'

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON : We have been told by the Serbian delegate that if he goes to Berne it is not to meet the Germans at all.

Mr. ADOLPH SMITH (the interpreter) : No, what he said was that the Serbians would go to Berne to accuse the Germans, and they could hardly do that if the Germans were not present.

Mr. ALEX. WILKIE, M.P. : I am utterly opposed to meeting the Germans anywhere. We had better face that position, because it is no good to try to mix things that won't mix. If we went to Berne with intentions as pure as those of angels from heaven we should be misunderstood, and until I get a mandate I am strongly and bitterly opposed to any such meeting.

Mr. BEN TURNER : The whole thing seems to me to be purely a business proposition. We want to remove the International Secretariat from Berlin, where it ought not to remain any longer. The question now is how that can best be accomplished. The Swiss have sent an invitation to the Berne Conference and the French have accepted it stipulating that the first order of the day shall be the question of the removal of the Secretariat. You cannot remove the Secretariat until you have a meeting of all the countries concerned.

Mr. WILKIE : Nonsense. They have broken every rule.

Mr. TURNER : I think it is necessary that the International should meet and discuss the proposition. I am not so blind as not to foresee that probably there will be discussions on other questions, and then the point will arise as to whether we shall talk about those other issues. I think the Serbian delegate has put the thing properly. They want a chance of accusing and impeaching the Germans face to face, and that again seems to me to be another business proposition. You cannot convince the Germans without meeting them and talking to them, and therefore, there may be some wisdom in this consultation. I believe our nation is in full accord with the principle

that there shall be some meeting at some time. At the Central Conference the resolutions were carried in the first instance by considerate majorities.

Mr. CRANION: Not by the rank and file.

Mr. TURNER: It is the usual way for Conferences to be held in this country, and that way has been accepted when the decisions have been favourable to certain sections. I want also to say that if we take the Trades Union Congress declaration we see that it believes in the International, and believe that there must be an International Conference of some sort at some time. It only holds that there must be some agreement amongst the Allies first. I can understand that being a desirable thing here. We agree on the removal of the International Secretariat to a neutral country (and there are neutrals in the technical sense of the word). I am with my Serbian friends in that think it is time to impeach the Germans on their deeds during the last three years. You cannot impeach them here in this room in a manner that will convince them. I believe that at some time we shall have to meet the Germans. The Government and the financiers and the religious bodies will meet them and why should not the workpeople meet them to talk business with them, to show them their evil deeds and to take away the International Secretariat from Berlin?

Mr. CRANION: It is a revival of Stockholm.

Mr. TOM SHAW: I think there is a possibility of finding a way out of the difficulty. I want to say a few words on the absolute necessity of taking the Bureau away from Berlin. It is evidently impossible for any of the belligerent countries to act in such a way as to be able to hold the balance equally between their own countries and the countries of the opposing Powers. Assuming that we had the Bureau in one of the belligerent countries, and that belligerent country and the Central Committee happened to come to a decision which was apparently unfavourable to that country. The Censor would at once stop the sending out of the country of any of the documents. An allied country could do no more than an enemy country, and we cannot carry on the business unless we have a guarantee that the scales will be held as evenly as it is possible to hold them in existing circumstances. The problem then comes as to the place in which the Secretariat shall be established. The English movement is very keenly divided on the question of meeting the Germans until the Germans have been taught that they can be beaten at their own game, but no one even in this country has suggested that the International should once and for all be broken. We have always worked for the maintenance of an International that will be more effective than ever after the war by virtue of the fact that it has seen its past mistakes. The only question that does divide us is as to whether, in order to get the removal of the International Secretariat from Berlin, it is necessary to meet the representatives of the Central Powers in conference. I suggest that we could meet each others wishes quite easily and without the trouble, the expense, and probably the turmoil of an International Conference at all. Why should not the Labour movements of the Allied Powers draw up a document stating specifically the grounds on which it is desirable that the Bureau should be transferred from Berlin? That document could be translated, and the Swiss could be asked to circulate it. The Germans could have a statement sent with it if they liked, and the various countries could be asked to vote by post on the question as to whether the Secretariat should be removed from Berlin. If the transference is decided on we shall then be at liberty to take steps for the re-establishment of the Bureau in a manner as much above suspicion as anything can be in the present state of affairs. It is absolutely essential that the International Secretariat should come out of Germany.

Everyone who has taken an interest in the International will agree that the most prominent men are Legien, Baumeister (Legien's assistant and handyman), Sassenbach, Yoehade (the leader of the German transport workers), and Hué (the leader of the German miners). Those five men are known all over the world as the leading representatives of the German International movement. Take Legien. Less than twelve months ago he signed a manifesto issued by Batocki (the German Food Controller), which asked the German people to fight on until a German peace was secured. That German peace meant annexations and indemnities. It is impossible that that man should act as Secretary of any International movement that will have the confidence of the Allies. Baumeister went to Berne and issued an International news letter. Sassenbach wrote articles putting the German position. It is impossible to rely on two men like that keeping the scales even. The transport workers' leader is in just the same frame of mind as the others, and has subscribed to the doctrine of military necessity. He is one of the men around Legien, and acts with him. The miners' representative is apparently of the same opinion, so that when you get five leading men like that at the head of the Bureau in Berlin it is impossible for us to accept that Bureau or its advice as being in any way fair and equitable. We must have the Bureau taken away from Berlin. Why go to the expense, the trouble, the turmoil, and the difficulty of calling a conference when we can place such a case before every country in the world that there can be no danger of a hostile vote going against the transference of the Bureau? A discussion can take place on the question as to which country the International Secretariat should be transferred, and once it is definitely established, then it will be for the country in which it is located to send out circulars, to send out invitations to the nations, and the nations could decide whether to accept those invitations and the terms on which they should be accepted or whether the invitations should be refused absolutely. That is an infinitely better way than going to a conference, simply to discuss and decide a question that can be discussed and decided by post on the initiative of the Swiss. We could get into working order without any friction, and possibly with good results to the whole International movement.

Mr. BEN COOPER: I should like to say a word or two in support of Mr. Shaw's suggestion. I think it is one worthy of consideration even by the French delegates, because, after all, they are attaching a large amount of importance to the value of the International. We want to have an International in reality and not one in name only. At present we have only an International in name. I want to put the position in this way. When Berlin was selected as the place in which the International headquarters should be located Berlin was then able to exercise the functions and the administrative activities necessary for carrying out the objects for which the International was formed. Events which have happened since (I am not going to charge the Socialists with being responsible for them) have prevented Berlin from being able to carry out the functions for which the International Secretariat was established there, and the Government which the German Socialists are supporting would forbid them exercising the powers with which they were invested by the other countries. If the majority of the nations concerned decide that is no longer possible for the functions of the International Secretariat to be carried out in Berlin are we going to say that we shall take no action whatever in the International movement because Berlin cannot carry out the work of the International? I very much regret the events which have happened, but I do say that we should not sit idly by and allow the International movement to be entirely suspended because the whole of the parties connected with it are not able to take their share in the work. If we really believe in the International then those countries which have the liberty to co-operate should maintain within their sphere of influence the

continuation of the policy of the International as widely as is possible. Mr. Shaw's suggestion is one which will enable that to be done for the time being. We say (and the great bulk of the people of this country agree) that there is a distinct objection at the present time to meeting the representatives of Germany. I endorse that feeling. If some arrangement can be arrived at by which the International Secretariat can be removed from Berlin to some neutral country then it should be done. I think it could be done by the process suggested by Mr. Shaw, and, in my opinion, that course should be adopted. The great majority of the allied countries believe that it would be humiliating to meet the Germans at the present time. I agree that it would be so long as the Germans glory in inflicting barbarities and atrocities upon innocent people. While that is done the spirit of the International is entirely gone from them, and until they practice the brotherhood which they preached before the war I do not feel disposed to accept the hand of friendship from them.

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON: I think the proposal made by Mr. Shaw is a very businesslike one. I cannot understand Mr. Ben Turner saying that it is a business proposition to go to Berne when the matter could be arranged through the post. That is the right way to do it, and certainly it will be in accord with the feeling in this country. Any Trade Union leaders who talk about meeting the Germans at the present time will be very badly turned down.

Mr. MALLALIEC: An hour or two ago I had the same proposition in my mind, and I mentioned it to the Chairman before he took the chair. One of the reasons I did not put it to the Conference is that I am not sure that the idea will accomplish what we are expecting of it, and I should like those who are in closer touch with the constitution of the International to give the Conference more information as to what our position will be if this idea works successfully. It would certainly relieve us of the journey to Berne, and of the responsibility in connection with an International meeting, but I am not sure that it would relieve us of the position which we have taken up as the General Federation of Trade Unions. All through the war our position has been that we could not take the German working-class delegates by the hand until their armies were back inside their own frontiers. If we transfer the International Secretariat from Berlin to Berne it does not rid us of the responsibility of inviting the Germans after the transference to participate in an International Conference. That is a point which I should like to have cleared up. If we do transfer the Secretariat from Berlin shall we be relieved of the responsibility of inviting the Germans to participate in the first International Conference which the new officers convene without passing a vote excluding them from the International?

The CHAIRMAN: I don't think I would deal with the future in that sense. To do so is to raise difficulties which circumstances may brush aside. I have put Mr. Shaw's suggestion into a resolution as follows: —

That the views of the countries affiliated to the International Federation be obtained in respect of the removal of the International Bureau from Berlin to some neutral country, these views to be obtained by post, and the Swiss Federation to be requested to undertake this work. In the meantime, the representatives of the allied countries shall draft a manifesto giving reasons for the removal of the Bureau, this manifesto to be transmitted to all countries affiliated, and the result of the vote to be returned to the Swiss Federation, which is to be requested to make known the determination to all belligerent and neutral countries within the organisation of the International Federation. Further, if the result be in favour of the removal of the Bureau, the Swiss Federation be requested to take the necessary steps to set up the office of the Bureau in a country subsequently to be decided on by the vote of the nations.

M. LEGRET (France) argued that the Conference had already decided by vote that the International Secretariat should be removed from Berlin to a neutral country. Now all they had to do was to discuss the means by which

that removal should be brought about. A postal referendum was proposed, but the Conference seemed to forget the meeting held in London in February, 1915. They then had interviews with the representatives of the American Federation of Labour and decided that by correspondence they would see if they could bring about the withdrawal of the Bureau from Berlin. They made what effort they could by post and completely failed, and now, after two years, they wanted to begin again and try to do what they failed to accomplish then. The only people who would respond favourably would be the allied countries, and even then they would not get them all. The Italians would not vote for them, and so they would not get unity even amongst the Allies let alone the neutrals and the Central Powers. If a meeting took place at the invitation of a neutral country the other neutral countries would be free to express their views and opinions. It would not be an Anglo-American conference or manoeuvre and neither would it be a German manoeuvre. It was very important that a Conference which decided on a question like this should be held in a neutral country and that it should be convened by a neutral country. It was possible that they might get a big verdict in favour of the Allies, but the verdict must be given in Switzerland and in response to the Swiss invitation and not as a result of a British and American manoeuvre. Supposing the British and the Americans refused to go to Berne. The only countries there representing the Allies would be France and Serbia. That meant that they would be preparing a German success, because the French and the Serbs were not likely to carry a pro-Ally majority. The British said it would be repugnant to them to meet the Germans. Did they think it would not be repugnant to the French? Had the French not equally great reasons for repugnance? But they were met as an International and for the International cause, and they wanted the millions of organised workers in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain to stand side by side with the Serbs and the French in trying to persuade the neutral peoples to vote against the Germans. Was it humiliating for them to do what the Red Cross Society had to do every day? Had not the doctors and the nurses to meet the enemy constantly? Why should their minds be more delicate, and why should their repugnance be a more dominating factor than it was in the case of the Red Cross workers. He hoped the British, the Americans, and the Canadians would decide to help defeat the Germans at the Berne Conference.

Mr. CRUXTON: Why do we not have something of a definite character from our French comrades. The International Secretariat seems to be the uppermost matter in their minds, but why do they leave the question of the agenda so vague as to imply that there is something else behind it? They say the first question on the agenda must be the removal of the Secretariat from Berlin. Somebody else says that it ought to be the last question. If our French comrades mean to discuss the question of the Secretariat only would it not be fair to say that when that matter has been discussed the Conference shall come to an end. Notwithstanding that I want it to be quite clear that I am not going to commit myself to any proposal in favour of the removal of the Secretariat from Berlin. Somebody else says that it ought to be the last question. If our French comrades mean to discuss the question of the Secretariat only would it not be fair to say that when that matter has been discussed the Conference shall come to an end. Notwithstanding that I want it to be quite clear that I am not going to commit myself to any proposal in favour of the removal of the Secretariat from Berlin. There is not the slightest analogy between this proposition and the fact that Red Cross workers meet Germans and exchange words with them. The Berne Conference is practically a second edition of the Stockholm proposal. We are not in a position to say that we can commit ourselves to that until

we have taken a referendum of the people we are supposed to represent. As one of the representatives of Great Britain I am not prepared to agree to meeting the enemy.

The CHAIRMAN: I gather that the British representatives are practically agreed on Mr. Shaw's proposal. Our American friends think it would be accepted by America, and the Canadian delegate also thinks it is a way out of the difficulty. We have almost reached a point of agreement and unanimity, and perhaps the French and Serbian delegates will consider the matter during the luncheon interval, and see if they cannot accept the proposed. If they can I think good work will have been done.

The Conference then adjourned for lunch, and when the proceedings were resumed the CHAIRMAN said he was given to understand that the French had considered Mr. Shaw's proposition, but could not accept it. If a vote was taken they would decline to take part in it, and would reserve to themselves the right to attend the Berne Conference. As far as he could see, it was utterly useless to take a vote.

Agreement with the proposition for a postal vote was then signified by the British, American, and Canadian delegates.

M. JOUHAUX said the French were not against consultation by post, but they thought the would be useless. It had already been tried and had utterly failed, and it was not likely to succeed any more now than it did two years ago. The French delegates would abstain from voting because they considered the proposed course of action absolutely useless. He very much regretted that the British, American, and Canadian delegates did not see the utility of proceeding to Berne. The French would adhere to the vote of their party and go. If they failed because they were alone they would in any case have done their best. As far as the war was concerned, the French nation would continue to fight and resist to the last. (Applause.)

Mr. CANNON: Is it decided, in spite of the discussion we have had, that the French are going to Berne to meet the Germans? Are we to take it that whether we fall in with it or not the French will take their own course? If so, are we to understand that whatever may transpire at Berne between the French and the Germans we shall in any shape or form be committed to their policy? Is it clearly understood that the French are taking this action on their own?

The CHAIRMAN: The French and the representatives of any other nationalities who may attend the Berne Conference will commit no one but themselves. The French will go there and consult, but it will be clear that whatever is agreed to will not have been agreed to by the constituent parts of the International Federation.

Mr. MALLIAU: I am prepared to respect the opinions held by the French, but inasmuch as two years have passed away since the last test of the nations was made on the question of the removal of the International Secretariat from Berlin I think we might try again by acting on Mr. Shaw's resolution, and let the French go to Berne if they like.

The CHAIRMAN: The French have said that they are not against the taking of the postal vote, but that they are in favour of the Berne Conference. It is for us who believe in this referendum to convey the request to the Swiss Federation.

Mr. CANNON: Had we better not take the opinion of this meeting and make our intentions clear even if we have to press it to a vote? We ought to take a decision on the proposition put forward by Mr. Shaw.

The CHAIRMAN: That has been done, and it will be acted upon. The British, American, and Canadian delegates are in favour of a referendum through the post. The French and the Serbian delegates did not vote, not

because they are opposed to it, but because they are going to Berne. At a Conference like this it would not be a correct thing to take a Conference by show of hands. The situation is, I think, fairly clear. The French are going to Berne, but they will pledge no one but themselves, whilst we shall send along our request to the Swiss Federation for a referendum vote of the nations to be taken.

M. JOUHAUX said he agreed with what the Chairman had said in definition of the situation, namely, that the French and Serbian delegations were not in any way opposed to the postal-referendum. They hoped it would have good results, but they adhered to the instructions they had received to proceed to the Berne Conference. He did not think it was necessary to await either the result of the Berne Conference or the postal referendum before discussing the matters on the agenda. On the contrary, he thought it would be very useful both in regard to the Berne Conference and to the postal referendum if they got some clearer ideas on the matters which appeared on the agenda. He thought that resolution No. 2 was but a reaffirmation of the resolutions carried at the Leeds Conference, and it would be well that those resolutions should be reaffirmed.

Mr. W. POPE (Textile Factory Workers' Association): Some of the British would not mind if the Berne Conference was to be held simply to discuss the removal of the International Secretariat from Berlin, and that only, but there is opposition to the discussion there of any other matters.

#### THE LEEDS PROGRAMME.

M. JOUHAUX then moved the following resolution:—

The Conference considers that the finish of hostilities will reveal an accumulation of new rights of workers; it demands that social progress shall be effective and international, and fully realise conclusion that "the worker is a citizen of the world." It demands that the workers in every country endeavour by similar and concerted action to compel the acceptance, by the Governments of the Entente, of the Workers' programme, adopted in Leeds in 1916, and it declares that this programme must be inserted—as the workers' charter—in the future treaty of peace. The Conference asks that the workers in every country will concentrate upon the same measures and aim at the same goals.

The Conference, desiring that on all great questions affecting the future of the world's workers, all necessary measures should be taken to secure understanding and concerted action, instructs the Bureau of Correspondence to make translations of, and in all languages, to comment upon, the resolutions adopted at the Conference, and at the same time to follow and note all the efforts and successes that become operative in each country.

Mr. ALLAN GEE (Germers' Federation of Trade Unions) seconded.

Mr. LORD (Amerian Federation of Labour): We are a bit in doubt about some of this. You have been nearer the heart of things than we have, and as this war goes on things happen which change men's minds and alter their line of reasoning. We do not believe that any time during the continuance of the war is opportune to discuss the terms of peace. We doubt the feasibility and the practicability of even discussing these things. There is an element of danger in discussing them. We heartily favour (and indeed we proposed it) a world conference of the workers the minute peace has been declared. We should like that conference to be held in the same place, and at the same time, that the representatives of the Governments meet, but we feel there is an element of danger in discussing peace proposals or any set programme until the war is over. We cannot at present subscribe to it.

The CHAIRMAN: May I assure our American friends that the Leeds resolutions do not refer in any way to the discussion of peace terms? They have nothing at all to do with peace, but they are a series of resolutions

declaring the necessity of a uniformity of Labour laws in all countries. There are Labour laws dealing with the child labour question, the seven days a week question, and the question of the weekly half-holiday for instance. The Leeds resolutions declare in effect that the best set of conditions shall be made the governing principle of all Labour legislation in all the countries of the world. They have nothing to do with the war. We will assume for a moment that the best Labour laws are those which exist in America. The Leeds resolutions say that every other nation should bring pressure to bear upon their respective Governments to pass laws approximating the Labour laws of the United States. If my American friends will accept my assurance on that point they will see that they can vote for this resolution.

Mr. GOLDEN: Do I understand from your explanation that the American delegates accepted these declarations of the Leeds Conference in their entirety?

The CHAIRMAN: We sent them to the Executive of the American Labour Federation, and I understand that they accepted them by post, clearly understanding that the resolutions were purely economic and did not concern peace proposals between the nations.

Mr. GOLDEN: Here is a letter dated August 7th, 1917, which says: "Your attention is called to the declaration of what has become known as the Leeds Conference. There are several matters of an economic character set forth in that Conference, supposedly to be secured by international legislation, with which the American Federation of Labour is not in accord."

The CHAIRMAN: The American Federation of Labour declared that even with regard to the economic resolutions they were very doubtful as to their wisdom. I do not know how the American Federation got hold of that idea, because I am sure that if the matter was explained to them they would accept the resolutions. In the first instance they only affect what we call the low-paid countries. Every effort should be made to help the Trade Unionists of those countries to bring pressure to bear on their Governments to enact Labour laws in conformity with the best Labour laws that exist in other countries.

Mr. LORD asked for the resolutions.

The CHAIRMAN: I will read the letter which we sent to our then Prime Minister. That letter summarises the whole thing. It is as follows: —

Dear Sir, — The Management Committee of the General Federation of Trade Unions desires that you should not misunderstand the purport and intention of this communication. It is not an indirect attempt to generally discuss terms of peace or to elicit expressions of opinion concerning them. The Management Committee realises the futility of such discussion at a time when neither group of belligerents admits defeat.

The programme enunciated aims at the resuscitation and effective direct of efforts to legislatively improve standards of life and education in different countries and amongst different peoples. Already something has been addressed to the Plenipotentiaries of the Holy Alliance in 1818 is understood to be the first clear expression of the desire for international protection of working-class interests.

Since that time many proposals for international co-operation in efforts improve social conditions have been discussed. In 1881, and again in 1889, Government of Switzerland brought proposals before European nations, and 1890 representatives of 14 States met in Berlin. This conference of diplomats and Statesmen sat for 15 days, and placed on record a number of opinions. Nothing really definite was achieved. The failure of the diplomats discoursed the idealists but did not prevent their continued efforts, and in 1904 France Italy signed what was perhaps the first Labour treaty.

This treaty provided amongst other things for: —

1. Facilities for the transfer of money deposited in savings banks.
2. Facilities for payment of contributions and the payment of benefits from national pension funds.
3. The inter-State operation of insurance against accidents incidental to employment, i.e., workmen's compensation.
4. The title or subject of either country to unemployment insurance.
5. The protection of miners employed in industry.

Since the signing of this treaty other international agreements have been entered into, and to-day it cannot be said that in pressing for Labour legislation on an international basis representatives of workmen are advocating the adoption of new or altogether impossible principles; they are rather asking that existing arrangements may be extended to other subjects and areas.

The Management Committee respectfully suggest that you, as Prime Minister of Great Britain, should bring before your colleagues in the Cabinet the desirability of discussing with the Governments of allied Powers the possibility of agreements dealing internationally with the labour of women and children, of night work, weekly rest days, and the maximum length of the working day, both for hazardous and non-hazardous occupations. You are also asked to use your influence and power to promote the appointment of an allied Commission of Inquiry into the laws of hygiene and safety, and the best methods of applying these industrially and socially. Railways, ships, docks, and mines offer immediate opportunities for the adoption of automatic and other aids to safety, and an arrangement should be made for a common struggle against industrial poisons, dangerous processes, and illnesses pertaining to occupations.

These are not pleas for classes, but for states. The allied nations are soon to be faced with grave recuperative problems. Dissatisfaction and inefficiency will dangerously affect their chances. They ought to secure the willing, intelligent, and educated co-operation of all their people, and maintain these people in healthy efficiency, if they are to avert disaster.

The Management Committee is not unaware of the difficulties which such a programme will encounter, but it is absolutely certain that the sacrifices made by the people for whom it pleads demand the highest consideration and the best efforts of those who are called to govern. Whatever the difficulties are, the task of raising the standard of civilisation should be faced with courage and determination.

The Management Committee has recently conferred with representative leaders of workmen from Belgium, France, and Italy, and in these countries working-class opinion is strongly in favour of ameliorative Labour legislation on international lines, with agreements incorporated in treaties, framed prior to or in connection with the treaties that end in peace. It is hoped that Russia and Portugal, also to be induced to assist in framing a common standard of well-being. If this is done the allied Powers will set a great example, not only to neutral, but to enemy countries.

Nearly all other wars have ended with treaties which conserved the rights of kings, the boundaries of nations, and the privileges of property. The poor people have had no part in the making of war or peace; they have suffered, they have endured concomitantly, and they have died, but never yet has monarch or statesmen made their situation a determining factor in a treaty of peace.

The time has arrived for better methods; for the consideration of the common rather than the particular interest; for the wide conception of human rights rather than the narrow one, and a beginning may be made on the lines indicated.

The Management Committee of the General Federation of Trade Unions is profoundly impressed with the importance of preventative and constructive action, and will await with grave anxiety your reply. When this has been received steps will be taken, in conjunction with our allied colleagues, to approach other Governments with a view to stimulating their sympathies and activities.

The CHAIRMAN: You will see from that that the resolutions contain a political character in the sense of ordinary politics, but only politics affect the home life and the factory well-being of the working classes only. We aim at similarity of Labour

legislation in the different countries. The trouble of the Trade Union movement internationally has been that we have had to deal with large aggregations of low-paid people. There is only one object in the Leeds resolutions, and that is to ameliorate the conditions of the working classes in all countries, but especially on the Continent of Europe. I feel certain our American colleagues will agree with that.

Mr. KEUFER (French Typographical Federation) explained that he was speaking as an individual delegate representing an individual society. He had framed a resolution, which was unanimously adopted at Leeds, and was to the effect that an international gathering should be held before the peace negotiations took place. The idea was that if they wanted to influence the peace negotiations they must do something before those negotiations began. The influence that it was desired to exercise on the diplomats was concerned purely with economic and Trade Union questions. There was an extremely heavy agenda for the International Conference which it was proposed to hold at Berne. It comprised questions of public health, inspection of factories, and Labour laws of all descriptions. It was a very elaborate economic agenda, a very big and wide programme. The resolutions carried at Leeds gave a pretty clear indication of what they should ask the Berne Conference to do if they took part in it.

Mr. LORD: As these resolutions and the attitude of the Leeds Conference have been explained to us we cannot see any ground for opposition. However, there is apparently some opposition on the part of the American Federation, although we are not quite clear about it. We are certainly not opposed to the matters which the Chairman has just put before the Conference. We want to vote for the resolution with a reservation in respect of anything that may arise in the future. It may be news to some of you that the American Federation has made a very plain declaration on hours fixed by Government. We have the fear that in those things there is a surrender to the Government, and that something is being done which may react strongly in the future. We feel that there is a possibility of a minimum wage becoming the maximum. These ideas are not held by everyone in the American Federation of Labour, but that is the Federation's declaration. If anything like that arises out of this resolution we do not want our vote to be construed as putting us in the position of violating the wishes of the movement we represent.

Mr. CRIMON: Has anyone seen any agenda that has been drawn up for the Berne Conference? M. Keufer mentioned many things that he said were to come up for discussion, so evidently there is an agenda.

Mr. APPLETON: There is some misunderstanding. The report of the Leeds Conference was issued, and the letter to Mr. Asquith was written and M. Keufer thinks the programme discussed in that letter that would be part of the agenda to be discussed at Berne. There has been no formal agenda drawn up for Berne, but every nation has received a copy of the programme which was elaborated at Leeds.

M. JOUHAUX said he would like to explain to the American delegates that at Leeds they did not propose any law. There was no proposal made in favour of any one special law. What they did propose was that such laws as existed should be assimilated internationally, and that it should longer be a weapon in the hands of the employers for them to be able to say: "We cannot grant you this or that condition because if we did, it should be put at a disadvantage in competing with such and such a country." The object of the Leeds resolutions was to take the best laws and make them models for all, to take such steps as would enable the

legislation to become the model of international legislation affecting all countries. They never dreamt of limiting the advantages that the working classes might have obtained by their organisation and industry, but they wanted to limit the amount of suffering that might be imposed on starving people who could not resist the forces arrayed against them. Labour laws were laws imposed by the working classes. The workers and not the Governments were responsible for Labour laws because the workers compelled the Governments to pass them. All such international laws as had been put into operation had been to the advantage of the working classes, and therefore he thought there could be no objection to the resolution. In his opinion the American delegates could well and consistently vote in favour of the principle of the action that was taken at the Leeds Conference. The resolution was carried unanimously.

#### WAR AIMS.

The Conference then proceeded to consider the following declaration of war aims:—

1. That peace must result in the abolition of all militarism, not only in Germany, but in all other countries.
2. That there shall be suppression of all secret diplomacy in the relationship between peoples; democratic principles must to-morrow rule national and international relationships, and the people must have exact knowledge of the responsibilities and engagements made in their name.
3. That there shall be complete restoration of liberty and independence to all the nationalities violated and oppressed.
4. That there shall be neither annexations, nor any mutilation of national life.\*
5. That in the future there shall be freedom of trade traffic and commerce.
6. In order to perpetuate a state of peace the Conference demands the organisation of an International, having as its basic principle equality of right for all nations, great and small.
7. To enforce the assent of nations to these principles and to assure the continuance of peace it is indispensable that there shall, at the end of the hostilities be constituted a "League of Nations," instead of any division of the people into two federations distinct and hostile.
8. The constitution of the "League of Nations" or of the "United States of the World" must be completed by the institution of "compulsory arbitration," and the provision for means of settling pacifically all international conflicts. Each State must have the right of appeal the tribunal sets up, and each State must be under obligation to submit to its decisions.
9. The Conference declares in favour of a limitation of armaments, not as an effort to secure equilibrium, but as a measure precedent to general international disarmament.
10. Declares that all these necessary measures cannot be secured unless the workers of every country unite in a workers' international and seek to realise and secure their aims in a truly international spirit.
11. In the spirit of the aforesaid propositions, the Conference, following the declaration of President Wilson "that peace must mark the advent of the society of nations," declares that all the efforts of workers in democratic countries must themselves strive for that principle of the society of nations which has already been partly realised, and press for the creation of treaties between the countries of the Entente, which must include clauses ensuring that all conflicts arising between any signatories shall be dealt with by an international tribunal representative of all the contracting nations.

\*The amendment agreed upon by the majority of the Sub-Committee, Mr. Appleton, disapproving and desiring the deletion of the paragraph, was as follows: "The Conference decries against all annexations by force; the people themselves having the only right to decide their nationality."

M. JOUHAUX said this resolution did not in any way fix the conditions peace that should be imposed but only affirmed the principles that should state the International. Those principles were exactly the same as they

were in the first days of the war. They were still in favour of the absolute freedom and independence of all nationalities. They were still against any form of imperialism that would seek to take by force the land of other nations. They were not in favour of domination or of conquest. Those were the general principles that animated the workers of all countries. While the enemy was still occupying some of the richest industrial provinces of France they were naturally going to continue to protest against any idea of annexation, but while they resisted annexation and ambition of that sort they were also to prevent the creation of a warlike class. They wanted to establish the absolute independence of all oppressed nationalities and they hoped that by doing so they would remove all causes of future wars. In any case they supported the pacific objects set forth by President Wilson in his recent declarations. They were very desirous to secure absolute freedom for democracy and at the same time to avoid aggressiveness or militarism.

Mr. Cross: I ought to explain the position of the British section in relation to the word "annexation." When we considered the subject at a meeting which we held in Blackpool we had some difficulty in deciding what was meant by the word "annexation" from the point of view of the French delegation. The reason the question arose and was discussed at some length was that we had doubts as to what would be the position, the mental attitude, and the physical attitude, of our Colonial brethren. Let me illustrate my point. The South African Union is a self-governing country, and for many years it had the Germans as neighbours. After the war broke out the German intrigues in South Africa culminated in a rebellion headed by one or two of the old Dutch leaders, and the South African Parliament declared war on the Germans in and about South Africa. The German territory is now in the occupation of the South African forces. In the event of the South African Union insisting that they would not again have the Germans as neighbours what would be the attitude of our French friends? Would they declare such a thing to be within the meaning of the word "annexation" when in reality it would be a case of the protection of civilisation against militarism? Then let us go to the other side of the world. We have to remember the position of the Australians. The Germans held several islands in the Pacific Ocean as coaling stations, repair stations, and observation stations, and the Australians have declared that in no circumstances will they have the Germans as neighbours. As far as I know they have not exactly said that they themselves will hold these islands, but they object to the Germans having them back again. As far as the holding by Germany of any part of France or Belgium is concerned we realise that such a thing would be a direct conquest by one nation over other contiguous nations, but the difficulty is as to how we are going to bear ourselves on those other matters in relation to the words "no annexations." I do not say this in any derogatory sense, but I am afraid the phrase has been rather loosely used. The colonies are self-governing nations, and whether we like it or not they have made up their minds (especially South Africa) reluctantly to oppose having the Germans as neighbours in any guise whatever. What do the French mean by the words "no annexations," and what those words embrace?

Mr. J. T. BROWNLIE (President of the British Section of the International Metal Workers): It seems to me that this is a very difficult matter to discuss. I have always understood that the French stood for the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine. I consider that is not annexation but restoration of that part of Europe which is considered by Frenchmen to be legitimate French. We are also brought up against the very thorny problem of people in the Balkans. If we wish to see the Poles restored nation here as to what these words mean, but I am apprehensive about the

there must be annexation on the part of someone. Then there are the small peoples of Austria. There must be annexation on the part of those peoples to the detriment of Austria. So I fail to see how we can agree to that paragraph as at present worded while we stand for the legitimate restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, the recreation of the Poles as a nation, and the renewing of the Hungarians and the other peoples in the Balkans. We do not want annexation as it is understood by rampant Imperialism, but I think this clause ought to be redrafted, or some plain definition given of what it means.

Mr. TOM SHAW: I want to appeal for the withdrawal of these words not because I am opposed to what I know is their spirit, but because I am absolutely certain in my own mind that they will be misunderstood in half the countries that form the International. We may look upon the returning to France of Alsace-Lorraine as restoration, and not annexation, but who can suppose for a moment that Austria and Germany can ever regard it as anything but annexation? We talk about the mutilation of national life. Up to the beginning of this war the nation of Turkey included Armenia. Is there any person in this room who would agree that in any circumstances whatever Armenia should go back to Turkey? The greatest crime ever committed in history is the crime committed by the Turks against the Armenians. If we talk of the mutilation of national life we should mutilate the Turkish national life by cutting away Armenia, but if we allowed Armenia to remain under the heel of Turkey we should be mutilating all that is best in human life. On the ground of clarity, I appeal for the withdrawal of these words. When the Russians proposed the Stockholm Conference they said that there should be neither annexations nor indemnities, but they have never said what they meant by that. How can we translate into different languages exactly what we do mean? We know what we mean, but these words cannot be translated into German so as to convey to the minds of German-speaking people what we intend them to convey. I would far sooner be without the declaration altogether than run the risk of the misunderstanding that this clause is bound to create.

M. JOUHAUX: We are opposed to all annexation that has been brought about by force. It is the employment of force that we object to.

Mr. ALFRED SHORT: I submit that there is no reason for assuming that there is any misunderstanding about the words "annexations," or "mutilation of national life." It is very late in the days for British delegates to begin to question the word "annexations." If after three years of war we are going to be afraid to be explicit enough to say definitely that we are not out for annexations, then we are going to violate the very reason for which we as a nation went into the war. We did not go into it for territory annexations. The expressed opinions of every leading statesman in our country have all repudiated annexations. Surely it is not for us Labour leaders, who have said that we have gone into this war for liberty, freedom, and democracy, to begin to infer, by refusing to say what we mean, that after all there is a doubt, and that there is something behind, some territorial annexation, which we seek to obtain. Alsace-Lorraine was not in dispute when this war commenced. We know that it was taken from France many years ago, and we can quite understand the French nation desiring to secure restoration, but in so far as the origin of the war was concerned it was in the picture, and therefore I suggest that we should maintain our attitude that as far as the British nation is concerned we are not out for annexations of any kind whatsoever.

Mr. Lord: There may be a very clear understanding amongst those present here as to what these words mean, but I am apprehensive about the

misunderstandings that may arise in other parts of the world if this paragraph goes out as it stands. America has gone into this war with the high and noblest of purposes. We cannot gain any territory or material advantage in the war because we know it is a war of democracy against autocracy. That is the spirit in which we intend to remain in the war until it is over. From the discussion which has taken place here, I believe that with all the good principles embodied in this resolution in its entirety we should be better off if this paragraph was not in at all. If it was withdrawn as better understanding would go out over the world.

M. NOVAKOVITCH objected to the term national life, and said he would prefer the word nationalities. Nearly all the frontiers had been established by the force of arms, and the working classes of the countries concerned had no voice at all in the drawing up of those frontier lines. It might very well be declared that they were opposed to all annexations that had been the result of war. It had been said that the Armenians did not wish to remain in the Grand Duchy of Polsen, but there were many people living in Warsaw, and Galicia, who had no desire to become Poles. In his opinion, the only solution of this conflict of desire and race was to call upon the people to decide for themselves. It would be disastrous to force people to belong to such and such a nation. By force in that connection he meant political decisions that were arrived at by the capitalists and the governing class generally. Such decisions should be the result of a wide vote. The people and not just the governing classes should decide whether such a territory should belong to this or that nation. In Austria there were many nationalities, but in certain States the Slovak population predominated to the extent of 90 per cent. or more, but yet it was not proposed to create a Slovak State. The whole affair was in a state of inexplicable muddle, and blamed the capitalist class for the confusion which existed. The only solution was to give the people the right to decide their own destiny.

Mr. GEE: Do we understand that the French insist on the retention of the words in the resolution?

M. JOUTHAUX said he agreed that it might possibly be advantageous to redraft paragraph 4, but they must be extremely careful to avoid doing anything whatever that would make it appear as if they were going back on the opinions they had already expressed. Anything that could be interpreted as meaning that they were backing out of their position (however wrong that interpretation might be) would be seized upon by the Central Powers again and utilised tremendously against the Allies. It was true that the word "annexations" seemed to have a different meaning when applied to European questions to the meaning it had when applied to Colonial questions, but in any case the European aspect was far and away the most important. At the same time, he had no strong feeling in favour of the particular words in the resolution, and if a small committee could be appointed to draw up some other phraseology, which would preserve the same meaning but express it differently, he would have no objection as long as they made it perfectly clear that they were not going back on the principles that they had already proclaimed.

Mr. SHAW: We could easily arrive at a form of words which would express what we all desire and to which no democrat could take exception. We know (and I assure the French that it is so) that these words would rise to misunderstanding and misapprehension. Even here there is a difference of opinion as to what they mean, and that is the clearest proof that the same words translated would only increase instead of decrease the misunderstanding. I have consulted with the French delegates and some of my British colleagues, and they are agreed that

misunderstandings to come to an understanding on a form of words that will not leave room for misunderstanding and which cannot be misrepresented.

Mr. BEN COOPER (who now occupied the chair): Is it your pleasure that this paragraph be referred to a small committee, consisting of Mr. Appleton, Mr. Jouthaux, one of the American delegates, and M. Novakowitch, so that they can find another form of words to express the same meaning in a more explicit way?

To this course the Conference agreed, and the remainder of the resolution was then upon adopted.

#### DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATIONS ON PEACE COMMISSIONS.

The Conference then proceeded to discuss the following resolution:—

This Conference places on record its appreciation of the sacrifices made and the losses endured by the workingmen and women of all the Entente countries. It considers that these sacrifices and losses have purchased their right to direct representation from every country on any commission which meets to discuss or determine terms and conditions of peace, and it instructs the Federations of each Entente country to press upon their Governments the necessity of an immediate acceptance of this request.

Mr. APPLETON: This is proposed in order to meet the situation that has arisen in various quarters. The American Federation of Labour desired a Conference of Labour representatives to meet at the same time, and in the same place as the diplomats meet to determine peace. Those who are in agreement with European politics know that there would be considerable divergents in a conference of that description. We feel that a far better and more practical plan will be to insist that Labour shall be directly represented upon any Commission that discusses or determines peace. We are no sense attempting to pre-empt representation. There are men, not present with us to-day, whom we would willingly accept as our representatives on any Commission to negotiate and sign peace. We can best avoid revealing our own weaknesses and divergencies by declining conferences where languages and ideals differ, and we best meet the situation by having Labour should be represented on any Peace Commission.

Mr. GOLDEN: The proposal for holding a Labour Convention in the same place and at the same time as the world's Peace Conference emanated from the Convention in San Francisco in November, 1914. We have been instructed not to propose, but, if the situation warrants it, to suggest that again, and in order to fulfil our mission we are going to make that suggestion. Do not imagine that we are doing this in order to interfere in any way with the resolution now before you. Rather than go into a long speech on the matter, I will read you an extract from the report of the Committee on International Relations, which handled this subject at our Convention at Baltimore. This report was presented to the Convention unanimously adopted. It said:—

We regret to report that the proposal of the American Federation of Labour to hold an International Labour Conference at the time and place when the representatives of the Governments of the various countries shall meet for the purpose of determining conditions of peace and entering into a treaty was not approved by the organised Labour movement of Great Britain. This action, together with the statement of President Legien, of the Federation of Trade Unions of Germany, that such a movement would be of doubtful practicability, necessarily requires that our position be abandoned. When information of this official rejection of the plan adopted by the San Francisco Convention reached this country, because of the tremendous importance of the plan and of the infinite boundless influence that a representation of wage-earners could have upon the deliberations of the World Peace Congress, the following suggestion was considered by us and adopted: "Since the first proposal submitted by the American Federation of Labour to the Labour organisations of Europe has been flatly rejected by them, we suggest that the organised Labour movements of

those countries that shall participate in the general peace conference to determine terms and conditions of peace at the close of the war, shall urge upon their respective Governments that the wage-earners shall be represented in an official commission from their respective countries. The same policy ought to be pursued also by organised Labour movements of neutral countries if it shall be determined that neutral countries also will participate in the general Peace Congress. The representatives of wage-earners would be seated with other representatives in the nations in general conferences connected with the formulation of peace terms. In this way the ideals and needs of wage-earners would be presented as considered by the general official body.

In view of that, added Mr. Golden, and while the resolution now before us differs somewhat in phraseology, we do not see that it is really different from what was unanimously accepted by our Convention at Baltimore last November, and so we heartily agree to it.

M. JOURDAIN: We received direct from Mr. Gompers the resolution which Mr. Golden has just read, and we wrote to the American Federation saying that we approved of it and suggesting that some arrangement should be made whereby the Labour representatives on the official Peace Conference should be able to meet by themselves and discuss matters among themselves as well as in the official Conference.

Mr. DAVID REES: In section 8 of this resolution the words "compulsory arbitration" are used. I have had experience of that in Canada, and I am afraid that it may act like a boomerang against us.

The CHAIRMAN: What it means is that there should be compulsory arbitration as between nations. The words as here used have no reference to industrial matters.

It was agreed that the Committee already appointed should insert words which would make that meaning perfectly plain.

M. KRIFTER: You have recognised that by their great sacrifices the working classes have established a right to participate in the peace negotiations. I want the resolution to specify that in a more precise manner the workingmen should be present at the Peace Conference as plenipotentiaries. Otherwise purely technical Labour questions will not adequately be dealt with. It is for the workers themselves to deal with Labour questions. Among the plenipotentiaries should be some direct representatives of working class.

The CHAIRMAN said that was already emphasised in the resolution.

The resolution was then unanimously adopted subject to the alteration to be made by the specially appointed Committee.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Ben Cooper) thanked the delegates for their attendance, and expressed the hope that their deliberations would be productive good to the workers of the world.

The Conference then concluded.